Koo, L.C., Ho, J.H.C., Matsuki, H., Shimizu, H., Mori, T., Tominaga, S. "A Comparison of the Prevalence of Respiratory Illnesses among NonSmoking Mothers and Their Children in Japan and Hong Kong" American Review of Respiratory Disease 138:290-295, 1988.

SUMMARY: Previous epidemiologic studies have associated symptoms of chronic bronchitis and other respiratory diseases with the risk for lung cancer. To assess the possible precursor or premonitory role of these conditions for lung cancer among nonsmokers, a comparison of the prevalence rates of these conditions in 2 urban industrialized communities (Hong Kong and a Tokyo suburb) with a 300% difference in female lung cancer incidence rates was conducted. A community survey of 314 nonsmoking mothers and their children in Hong Kong, and 243 mothers and children in Japan showed that the prevalence of reported chronic cough and sputum symptoms was 10 or more times higher in Hong Kong than in Japan. The disparity in the rates of respiratory diseases/symptoms was most apparent in the comparison of children. Occupational exposure to dust or fumes and larger household sizes were found to be associated with higher levels of respiratory illnesses among the Hong Kong mothers. The much higher prevalence rates of respiratory symptoms among Hong Kong than among Japanese subjects correlated with each community's female lung cancer incidence rates of 27.1 versus 8.1/100,000, respectively.

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